

# Cosmetic dentistry in 2016:

## An interview with Joyce Bassett, DDS

Chris Salierno, DDS

Joyce Bassett, DDS, is president of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD). She maintains a successful private practice in Scottsdale, Arizona, and is an internationally recognized writer and lecturer in cosmetic dentistry. As you can imagine, she's a fascinating person to talk with. Here's an excerpt from one of our conversations.

**CS:** Because cosmetic dentistry isn't an official specialty, any dentist out there can put "cosmetic dentist" on his or her shingle. What do you think distinguishes true cosmetic dentists from the rest?

**JB:** There are specific characteristics that distinguish cosmetic dentists from general dentists. Cosmetic dentists are (1) detailed in the implementation and (2) artistic in the execution of the dentistry being performed. They are also up-to-date on the latest techniques and materials. They have a passion for lifelong learning. Cosmetic dentists don't take continuing education classes only to return to the office and practice in exactly the same manner they did in the past. They return to their practices and make changes. They update their systems, protocols, and materials, and they elevate their practices to a higher level. True cosmetic dentists are detail-oriented, laser-focused, meticulous, and consistent in implementation. They are selective in all areas. Their eyes are trained to see minor details, and they have meticulous hand skills that can

create shapes and forms that are dictated by the vision for the final outcome. They practice responsible esthetics, consider the health of the entire body, and have the best interest of the patient at heart. Cosmetic dentists practice minimally invasive techniques and reduce the loss of healthy tissue if at all possible.

**CS:** In the past 10 years, what advances in technology and materials have changed cosmetic dentistry the most?

**JB:** I've got three for you. First, *adhesive technology* has advanced to the point that it's much easier to use correctly. There used to be so many steps that dentists could easily introduce an iatrogenic complication. With more simplicity comes increased predictability, less sensitivity, and fewer failures.

The second advancement is in *modern ceramics*. Being able to make monolithic restorations from zirconia or lithium disilicate means we get a balance of strength and esthetics.

Finally, as a cosmetic dentist, you have to appreciate *digital smile design* and *3-D planning* of the restoration. It has made communicating ideas with patients and laboratories so much better.

**CS:** What imaginary product or material would you like to have that would change the way you practice?

**JB:** I would like the ability to treatment plan and execute dentistry virtually and use one platform. Imagine clinical photographs, radiographs, and other patient data seamlessly integrating with one another. Imagine developing a treatment plan and then remotely controlling the anesthesia, teeth preparation, restoration fabrication, insertion,





Joyce mentions **advances in bonding technology** and ceramic materials as having a great impact on cosmetic dentistry in the past ten years. I would have to agree! Where would we be without a modern ceramic like e.max? Combine that with a resin cement like Variolink Esthetic, which offers diverse shade options, and dentists have control that they never had before. PFMs and traditional luting cements just can't hold a candle to the esthetic possibilities we now enjoy. —Chris

and adjustments to the patient's chewing cycle. All this would occur while I drank coffee at my house and planned my hike on Camelback Mountain.

**CS:** Let's say I'm an aspiring cosmetic dentist, but I don't think I'm ready for the AACD accreditation program just yet. What resources should I use to get myself prepared?

**JB:** One of the most difficult situations for a dentist is allowing another dentist to critique his or her work. Although the process is meant to edify the professional, it can be perceived as destructive criticism. This cannot be further from the truth. Going through the accreditation process trains the eyes and enhances one's ability to recognize excellent work. There are many dentists who do not want their work reviewed, but they do want to become better dentists. The question then becomes, "Where will they go to get their training and education?"

The AACD scientific session encompasses comprehensive cosmetic dentistry. The

presentations are state-of-the-art and interactive. In four days participants can receive training for every aspect of dentistry. The hands-on workshops are designed to tweak the nuances in manual dexterity that one can only see and learn in that forum. Plus, the relationships that are created within the mentoring process create bonds that last a lifetime. **DE**

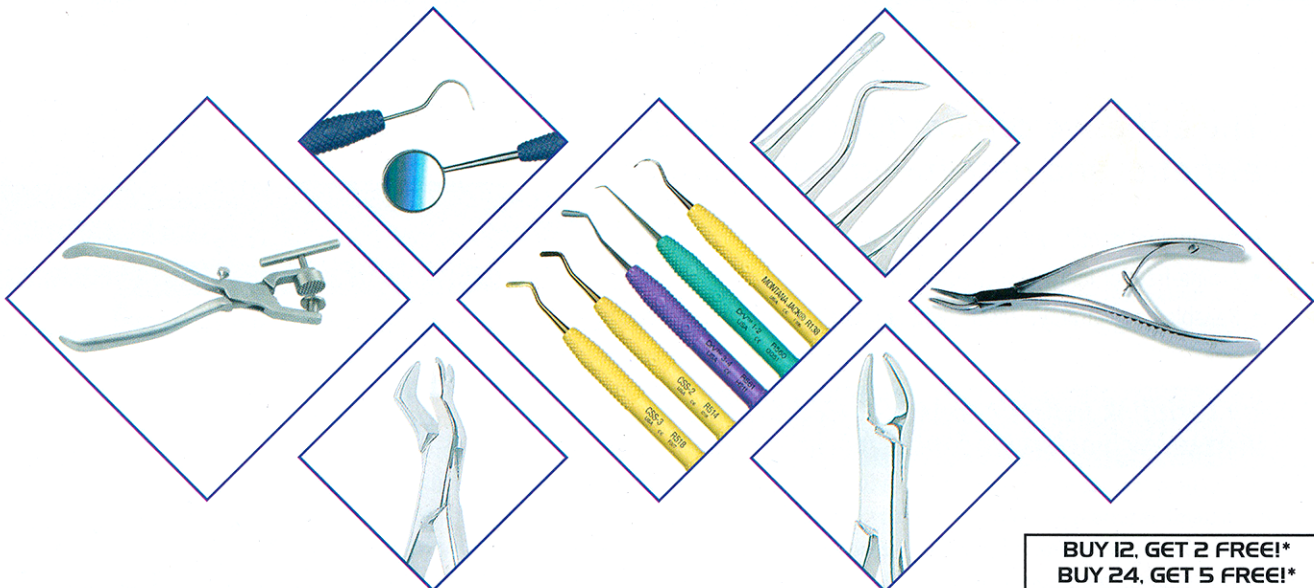


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